

§ 764.11 General process requirements.

Each State shall establish a process enabling objective decisions to be made on which, if any, land areas of the State are unsuitable for all or certain types of surface coal mining operations. These decisions shall be based on competent, scientifically sound data and other relevant information. This process shall include the requirements listed in this part.

§ 764.13 Petitions.

(a) *Right to petition.* Any person having an interest which is or may be adversely affected has the right to petition the regulatory authority to have an area designated as unsuitable for surface coal mining operations, or to have an existing designation terminated. For the purpose of this Action, a person having an interest which is or may be adversely affected must demonstrate how he or she meets an "injury in fact" test by describing the injury to his or her specific affected interests and demonstrate how he or she is among the injured.

(b) *Designation.* The regulatory authority shall determine what information must be provided by the petitioner to have an area designated as unsuitable for surface coal mining operations.

(1) At a minimum, a complete petition for designation shall include—

(i) The petitioner's name, address, telephone number, and notarized signature;

(ii) Identification of the petitioned areas, including its location and size, and a U.S. Geological Survey topographic map outlining the perimeter of the petitioned area;

(iii) An identification of the petitioner's interest which is or may be adversely affected by surface coal mining operations, including a statement demonstrating how the petitioner satisfies the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section;

(iv) A description of how mining of the area has affected or may adversely affect people, land, air, water, or other resources, including the petitioner's interests; and

(v) Allegations of fact and supporting evidence, covering all lands in the petition area, which tend to establish that

the area is unsuitable for all or certain types of surface coal mining operations, pursuant to specific criteria of sections 522(a) (2) and (3) of the Act, assuming that contemporary mining practices required under applicable regulatory programs would be followed if the area were to be mined. Each of the allegations of fact should be specific as to the mining operation, if known, and the portion(s) of the petitioned area and petitioner's interests to which the allegation applies and be supported by evidence that tends to establish the validity of the allegations for the mining operation or portion of the petitioned areas.

(2) The regulatory authority may request that the petitioner provide other supplementary information which is readily available.

(c) *Termination.* The regulatory authority shall determine what information must be provided by the petitioner to terminate designations of lands as unsuitable for surface coal mining operations.

(1) At a minimum, a complete petition for termination shall include—

(i) The petitioner's name, address, telephone number, and notarized signature;

(ii) Identification of the petitioned area, including its location and size and a U.S. Geological Survey topographic map outlining the perimeter of the petitioned area to which the termination petition applies;

(iii) An identification of the petitioner's interest which is or may be adversely affected by the designation that the area is unsuitable for surface coal mining operations including a statement demonstrating how the petitioner satisfies the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section;

(iv) Allegations of facts covering all lands for which the termination is proposed. Each of the allegations of fact shall be specific as to the mining operation, if any, and to portions of the petitioned area and petitioner's interests to which the allegation applies. The allegations shall be supported by evidence, not contained in the record of the designation proceeding, that tends to establish the validity of the allegations for the mining operation or portion of the petitioned area, assuming

that contemporary mining practices required under applicable regulatory programs would be followed were the area to be mined. For areas previously and unsuccessfully proposed for termination, significant new allegations of facts and supporting evidence must be presented in the petition. Allegations and supporting evidence should also be specific to the basis for which the designation was made and tend to establish that the designation should be terminated on the following bases:

(A) Nature or abundance of the protected resource or condition or other basis of the designation if the designation was based on criteria found in § 762.11(b) of this chapter;

(B) Reclamation now being technologically and economically feasible if the designation was based on the criteria found in § 762.11(a) of this chapter; or

(C) Resources or conditions not being affected by surface coal mining operations, or in the case of land use plans, not being incompatible with surface coal mining operations during and after mining, if the designation was based on the criteria found in § 762.11(b) of this chapter;

(2) The State regulatory authority may request that the petitioner provide other supplementary information which is readily available.

§ 764.15 Initial processing, record-keeping, and notification requirements.

(a)(1) Within 30 days of receipt of a petition, the regulatory authority shall notify the petitioner by certified mail whether the petition is complete under § 764.13 (b) or (c). Complete, for a designation or termination petition, means that the information required under § 764.13 (b) or (c) has been provided.

(2) The regulatory authority shall determine whether any identified coal resources exist in the area covered by the petition, without requiring any showing from the petitioner. If the regulatory authority finds there are not any identified coal resources in that area, it shall return the petition to the petitioner with a statement of the findings.

(3) If the regulatory authority determines that the petition is incomplete, frivolous, or that the petitioner does not meet the requirements of § 764.13(a), it shall return the petition to the petitioner with a written statement of the reasons for the determination and the categories of information needed to make the petition complete. A frivolous petition is one in which the allegations of harm lack serious merit.

(4) When considering a petition for an area which was previously and unsuccessfully proposed for designation, the regulatory authority shall determine if the new petition presents significant new allegations of facts with evidence which tends to establish the allegations. If the petition does not contain such material, the regulatory authority may choose not to consider the petition and may return the petition to the petitioner, with a statement of its findings and a reference to the record of the previous designation proceedings where the facts were considered.

(5) The regulatory authority shall notify the person who submits a petition of any application for a permit received which includes any area covered by the petition.

(6) The regulatory authority may determine not to process any petition received insofar as it pertains to lands for which an administratively complete permit application has been filed and the first newspaper notice has been published. Based on such a determination, the regulatory authority may issue a decision on a complete and accurate permit application and shall inform the petitioner why the regulatory authority cannot consider the part of the petition pertaining to the proposed permit area.

(b)(1) Promptly after a petition is received, the regulatory authority shall notify the general public of the receipt of the petition by a newspaper advertisement placed in the locale of the area covered by the petition, in the newspaper providing broadest circulation in the region of the petitioned area and in any official State register of public notices. The regulatory authority shall make copies of the petition available to the public and shall provide copies of the petition to other